

**Florida MPO Advisory Council**  
**Meeting of the Policy and Technical Committee**  
**July 7, 2021**  
**Marco Island, Florida**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes**

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

**IN-PERSON (STAFF DIRECTORS – A TOTAL OF 5 WITH 4 MAKING AN IN-PERSON QUORUM):**

Don Scott, Chair, Lee County MPO  
Dave Hutchinson, Vice Chair, Sarasota/Manatee MPO  
Beth Alden, Hillsborough TPO  
Michael Woods, Lake-Sumter MPO  
Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO

**IN-PERSON (OTHERS):**

Paul Gougelman, MPOAC  
Jeff Kramer, MPOAC/CUTR  
John Waldron, MPOAC  
Brandy Otero, Collier MPO  
Jeff Sheffield, North Florida TPO  
Wayne Gaither, FDOT  
Abra Horne, FDOT  
Kenyatta Lee, FDOT  
Alison Stettner, FDOT  
Macey Fricke, Kimley Horne  
Candice Ericks, TSE/BCMPO  
John Kaliski, Cambridge Systematics  
Steve Morello, CDM Smith  
Billy Hattaway, Fehr & Peers  
Greer Gillis, JTA

**VIRTUAL (STAFF DIRECTORS – A TOTAL OF 3 THAT CANNOT CONTRIBUTE TO A QUORUM):**

Greg Stuart, Broward MPO  
Austin Mount, Florida-Alabama TPO  
Beth Beltran, Martin MPO

**VIRTUAL (OTHERS):**

Tia Boyd, CUTR  
Christen Miller, CUTR  
Paul Calvaresi, Broward MPO  
Gary Harrell, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO  
Gurram Lakshmi, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO  
Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas

Marybeth Soderstrom, Heartland Regional TPO  
Ron Gogoi, Lee County MPO  
Chandra Frederick, Polk TPO  
April Combs, FDOT  
Chris Edmonston, FDOT  
Gerald Goosby, FDOT  
Teresa Parker, FDOT  
Dana Reiding, FDOT  
Allison Fluitt, Kimley-Horn and Associates  
Michael Garau, Kimley-Horn and Associates  
Sheri Coven, Cambridge Systematics

There was 1 additional person attending virtually who was unlabeled.

#### • CALL TO ORDER

Don Scott, Chair, Lee County MPO, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The Chair welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established in the meeting room. Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO made a motion to allow members attending online to participate in the meeting due to the extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19. A second was made by Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### • APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JUNE 4, 2021 MEETING

Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO, made a motion to approve the June 4, 2021 minutes. A second was made by Mike Woods, Lake-Sumter MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### • PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

#### • BUSINESS ITEMS & PRESENTATIONS

##### A. REVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MPOAC/FDOT MOU AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

#### **MOU**

Chair Scott gave a recap of the key points made in the MOU and shared his comments on the June 4<sup>th</sup> Policy and Technical Committee meeting discussion. These included the following:

- FDOT will continue to host the MPOAC
- The MPOAC Executive Director position will function similarly to the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) where the Executive Director reports to the MPOAC Governing Board
- The salary and evaluations would be determined by the MPOAC Governing Board

- The MPOAC Executive Director will be considered an FDOT employee for office space and other administrative needs.

Mr. Scott called for a discussion on the MOU outline that was developed at the June 4<sup>th</sup> Policy and Technical Committee meeting. The meeting attendees discussed the following:

- Dave Hutchinson, Vice-Chair, Sarasota-Manatee MPO, summarized the motion recommending that the MPOAC Governing Board vote that the MPOAC remain hosted by FDOT and to develop the MOU to clarify the role of the MPOAC Governing Board.
- Mr. Scott discussed the following questions and conversation points that were included in the draft MOU framework:
  - What support will FDOT continue to provide?
    - The position will be inside of the Office of the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for fiscal and accountability purposes.
    - FDOT shall provide equipment, office and meeting space, and other materials needed to conduct business.
    - The business is consistent with the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the bylaws, and the MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan, and as directed by the MPOAC Governing Board
  - Who approves Executive Director's timesheet?
    - The Governing Board Chair or members of the Executive Committee will approve time sheets
  - Who approves travel?
    - A member of the Executive Committee will approve travel
  - Determination of salary?
    - The MPOAC Governing Board would set the salary range that is being advertised

The group was reminded of the 5 key points discussed during last meeting. These points included:

1. Where the Executive Director's home office will be located and location flexibility;
2. The role of the MPOAC Executive Board and Governing Board;
3. The Executive Director's salary;
4. The Executive Director's job description; and
5. The MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan.

Alison Stettner, FDOT, shared that the FDOT Secretary is comfortable with the current salary and that further rate is not available for a higher salary. The MOU would need to reflect that the salary is set at the current rate. She stated that the MOU needs to be narrow in its constraints to ensure that it is clear and concise - it should clarify what the Department would be agreeing to and define the relationship between FDOT and the MPOAC. Dave Hutchinson stated that the MOU should clarify what the statute says regarding the role of the MPOAC Governing Board. It was suggested that the group continue with the MOU framework as written and circulate it through leadership for further comment. Committee members discussed their concerns and emphasized the importance of filling the MPOAC Executive Director position. Don

Scott stated that the committee should make their recommendations to the MPOAC Governing Board and proceed based on the Board's decision.

The meeting attendees discussed the job location to clarify wording for the travel requirements. Jeff Kramer, MPOAC Interim Executive Director/CUTR, explained that, based on the recording from the last meeting and his interpretation of the discussion, the Executive Director would be in Tallahassee 25-50% of the time and travel to other MPOs, out of state conferences, MPOAC quarterly meetings, and MPOAC committee meetings up to 50% of the remaining time. With travel requirements stated in this manner, 50-75% of the time could be spent traveling. The group concluded that the job description should include the percentage of travel anticipated and should clarify that a substantial amount of time (25-50%) will be spent in Tallahassee and traveling to MPOs across the state. This addition to the job description will ensure that the expectations are clear to potential candidates.

Mr. Scott asked if, for the purposes of the MOU, they are agreeing that the position location is flexible and can be at any FDOT facility. The group discussed where the MPOAC Executive Director will be stationed. The discussion included the following:

- Austin Mount, Florida-Alabama TPO, asked if the position will be based out of Tallahassee. He shared concerns about the impact a flexible location would have on the relationship between FDOT Central Office and the MPOAC. He asked that the group consider clarifying that 25-50% of the time in Tallahassee will not include the time spent in Tallahassee for the legislative session.
- Dave Hutchinson suggested that they continue to reference [Section 339.175\(11\), Florida Statutes](#): “[t]he council is assigned to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation for fiscal and accountability purposes, but it shall otherwise function independently of the control and direction of the department.”
- Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO, asked the group to consider if they want a candidate who focuses on the relationship with FDOT, or if they want a candidate who focuses on the operations of MPOs and serves as a resource to the MPOs. Mr. Mikyska stated that as the MPOAC Executive Director, he tried to find a balance between those two roles.
- Don Scott reminded the group of the Governing Board members' desire to see the Executive Director visiting individual MPOs. If the Executive Director position was housed more centrally, it may make this level of travel more feasible.
- Ms. Stettner shared that she found it beneficial to have the MPOAC Executive Director housed in Tallahassee to troubleshoot any issues that come up and attend meetings in person.
- Beth Alden agreed with the value of proximity as discussed by the group, but stated that technology can provide a medium for meetings and other interactions between the Executive Director and FDOT Office of Policy Planning. If the Executive Director has flexibility in location (at least 25% in Tallahassee), it may open up the pool of candidates and provide the MPOs more access to the MPOAC Executive Director.

- Don Scott asked the group if there was consensus on the position being flexible and located somewhere in the state in one of the districts or in Tallahassee. He asked how many committee members wanted the MOU to state that the position should be in Tallahassee.
  - Austin Mount stated that he would want the MPOAC Executive Director to be stationed in Tallahassee.
- Alison Stettner clarified that the statute states that the position is assigned to the Office of the Secretary, which covers all of FDOT, regardless of location in the state. The position can be in alignment with the statute and be flexible, as long as it is in an FDOT building. She echoed Ms. Alden’s statement regarding the benefits of technology in providing the necessary communication and interactions between FDOT and the MPOAC Executive Director.
- Carl Mikyska asked if it would be helpful to clarify which cities have facilities that the position could be housed in, specifying locations in central Florida.
- Dave Hutchinson stated that the recommendation to the Governing Board should be that the office is located in Tallahassee.
- Jeff Sheffield stated that a permanent location can be maintained in Tallahassee and add language for flexibility with satellite offices for the MPOAC Executive Director in each district.
  - Beth Alden agreed that an office at an FDOT facility as agreed upon between FDOT and the Governing Board of the MPOAC would be appropriate wording.
  - Alison Stettner clarified that FDOT has guest office space in most offices, they are shared spaces, and cannot be dedicated to one group, such as the MPOAC, but they are available for use, as needed.

The meeting attendees discussed the MPOAC Executive Director’s salary. The following items were addressed:

- The legislature gives FDOT a set number for employee salaries and benefits, which is referred to as rate. To increase salary for one person, it would require adjusting another person’s salary to keep the budget balanced. Changing the rate requires a legislative change.
- The pros and cons of being hosted under FDOT.
  - It was clarified that, at this time, the group is not seeking independence from FDOT.
  - The Board will have to be advised on the cost of seeking independence and made aware that MPOs will need to contribute local funds. These costs have not been investigated.
- The current rate for the MPOAC Executive Director is approximately \$109,000.
  - The statutes mention budgetary limitations and the ability to employ based on those budgetary limitations.
  - Redefining the position in the administrative structure would require a statutory change.
  - The MPOAC cannot award bonuses using PL funds. The legislature passed a statute stating that there can’t be special bonuses or severance fees unless it exists in the personnel program.

Meeting attendees discussed the MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan. Alison Stettner shared that the MOU framework would be acceptable for the Department. The strategic plan could address many of these issues and be used to get the buy-in from the MPOs. Analysis could be done during the strategic plan update with input from the MPOAC Governing Board members. The MPOAC Governing Board could then decide if they want to spend the funds to pursue the changes identified by the Policy and Technical Committee. The agreement could include a provision that, in the forthcoming year, FDOT and the MPOAC would negotiate an amendment to the MOU. This negotiation would include setting salary ranges and conditions for the MPOAC Governing Board to recommend raises.

Mr. Scott reminded the group of the discussion at the June 4<sup>th</sup> Policy and Technical Committee meeting to identify a range based on the Executive Director positions for the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) and the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The FTC salary is set at \$128,750 and the CTD is at \$100,940.32. Mr. Scott asked the group if they were okay with recommending a range at this point and if they were okay with a maximum of \$125,000. Mike Woods, Lake-Sumter MPO, responded that there may already be a range for the position and that they should work within the FDOT framework if one exists.

Dave Hutchison stated that they should work in the next year to see if there is potential for an adjustment to the salary. Typically, when a high-level position is vacant, agencies “reset” the position and may hire someone with less experience who starts at a lower rate. Experience would determine the rate and where in the range the candidate would be hired.

Jeff Sheffield, North Florida TPO, added that the immediacy is finding the right Executive Director and addressing the competitive nature of the position. He explained that after the Executive Director position is addressed, they should come to an agreement on the future direction of the MPOAC, adopt a new strategic plan with that direction, and then establish an MOU with FDOT based on the outcome of the strategic plan. It was suggested that the group consider a holistic approach and ensure that they are competitive enough to get an Executive Director on board. The concern for the Executive Director position is the ability to make adjustments and increases for the Executive Director’s salary over time and the ability for an individual to grow in the position. Dave Hutchinson proposed that they work the suggestions from Jeff Sheffield into the recommendations for the Governing Board to ensure that they understand the complexity of these issues and the time they will take to address. Addressing these issues will take more time than is available before a new Executive Director is hired.

Jeff Sheffield continued that the MPOAC Executive Director would need to lead the effort to update the strategic plan and assist the MPOAC as they determine the future of the organization. Therefore, the MOU should include a bullet that covers these items and state “to be defined through a strategic planning exercise”. At an appropriate time, there can be discussion between the MPOAC and FDOT to establish the details of the agreement.

Meeting attendees discussed additional items from the draft MOU framework including clarifying what “administratively hosted” means, the Florida Retirement System (FRS) senior management class, and the feasibility of additional organizational insurance. It was clarified that all of these items do not need to be in the MOU but should be defined in the strategic plan. The MOU should be as simple and as straight forward as possible.

When Carl Mikyska was the MPOAC Executive Director the position was classified as Select Exempt Services. He further clarified that he was hired at the same rate that the previous Executive Director, Howard Glassman, had before he retired. During Carl’s tenure as the Executive Director, there was a 3% raise for all FDOT employees in addition to a one-time \$1,000 raise.

Mr. Scott restated that they are outlining what can be recommended to the Governing Board with the focus to push the strategic plan and advertise the position with some location flexibility. Paul Gougelman, MPOAC Counsel, asked if the group is still pursuing the MOU or revisions to the strategic plan. Mr. Scott responded that the group is looking for a simple MOU that outlines the future direction of the MPOAC and that the strategic plan will be revised at a later date. The salary range will be negotiated as a part of the strategic plan, right now the position will be advertised at the current rate. Dave Hutchinson clarified that they would be seeking to explore options for growth in the salary for the position another time.

Don Scott explained that there will be a vote at the Staff Directors meeting on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Recap of key points:

1. The position will be based in Tallahassee with satellite offices in each FDOT district
2. The Executive Director’s salary will be modified to a range within FDOT’s structure as specified by the MPOAC
3. Other elements will be defined through a strategic planning exercise

This recommendation was approved by consensus of the membership.

### **Executive Director Job Description**

Paul Gougelman, MPOAC Counsel, informed the group that the Labor Council with his firm had reviewed the MPOAC Executive Director’s job description.

Don Scott suggested changes to the travel summary in the job description. The description would state that the position requires 25-50% of the time traveling.

Jeff Kramer, MPOAC Interim Executive Director/CUTR, shared that 6 years ago when the Executive Director position was advertised, FDOT Human Resources Division interpreted Tallahassee-based to mean that the person needed to be in the Tallahassee office 50% of the time. Abra Horne, FDOT, restated Alison Stettner’s statement that FDOT-based includes all of the FDOT offices and that she will coordinate with Alison Stettner to review the language in the

job description to ensure that there will be no misinterpretation by FDOT Human Resources or others. Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, explained that, for tax purposes, there needs to be an office, and if someone relocates, mileage stipulations will be applied.

Don Scott continued to the education and experience section of the job description. Meeting attendees discussed the following:

- Beth Alden, Hillsborough TPO, requested to include a statement that American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification is preferred.
  - It was clarified that FDOT policy does not allow for Department resources to pay for memberships and using local funds to pay for credentials would also be considered state expenditure.
- Mr. Gougelman explained that the job description should identify degree level for the candidates. The group discussed the following preferences for education and experience:
  - Preferred master's degree in Planning, Urban Studies, Geography, Political Science, Public Administration, Business Administration, or degrees in other related fields.
  - 8 years of experience working at an MPO, federal or state transportation agency, consulting firm, private sector firm, or similar organization in the field of planning, particularly in urbanized areas.
  - A combination of degree and experience would qualify. A candidate with a Bachelor's degree (BA/BS) or unrelated degree may need more years of experience.
  - AICP certification preferred

Alison Stettner updated the group that the pay range in 2015 for the MPOAC Executive Director position was between \$100,000 and \$120,000 and the code for the broadband is BB03. Meeting attendees discussed that they need to identify how the MPOAC can have input on this range and the timing of the MOU in relation to the hiring process.

Jeff Sheffield suggested that the process follow three steps: (1) advertise and hire, (2) start a strategic plan, and (3) start an MOU based on the direction in that strategic plan. Mr. Hutchinson responded that he would like to update the recommendation for the Governing Board to use the process being suggested by Mr. Sheffield and delay the development of the MOU. Don Scott replied that the MOU would not be approved at the Governing Board meeting in July, but an outline would be helpful to communicate the discussion points from the Policy and Technical Committee meetings.

The group discussed the possibility of the MPOAC Executive Director position being FDOT-based with locations central to the state or Tallahassee. The discussion included the following points:

- The language can state that the position may be located in the following cities: Tallahassee, Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville.
- If satellite offices with a home base is specified, it needs to be clear where the candidate will live versus where offices will be located.
- The group discussed the pros and cons of being located in Tallahassee or somewhere else in the state.

- Alison Stettner, FDOT, shared that they can include a facility map to show the DOT hosted facilities. With the transition to an increased use of technology for day-to-day operations the position is not required to be in Central Office.
- Austin Mount, Florida-Alabama TPO, added that during the legislative session, Carl Mikyska, when he was the MPOAC Executive Director, spoke to the representatives and senators often. He proposed that information identifying how the MPOAC would address the Executive Director's location during the legislative session be included in the strategic plan.
- Mr. Gougelman restated that the group discussed approximately 25% of the time involves travel, the position is currently housed in Tallahassee, but could be moved to Tampa, Orlando, or Jacksonville. Ms. Alden added that they should specify that working space would be available in other FDOT offices. The group discussed the specifics of the home base and travel requirements.

It was concluded that the job description will state that the position will be located at a DOT-hosted facility and the job description will include a facility map. Approximately 25% up to 50% of the Executive Director's time will require working in Tallahassee and traveling to individual MPOs across the state, meetings, conferences, etc.

When advertised, questions will be directed to a designated contact at FDOT and the MPOAC.

This recommendation was approved by consensus of the membership.

## B. CONSOLIDATED PLANNING GRANT RESOLUTION

Mr. Scott asked the meeting attendees if there were any issues remaining on the Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) resolution. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, this item will be voted on by the MPOAC Staff Directors' Advisory Committee and the recommendation will go to the MPOAC Governing Board for a vote.

Members raised concerns about how the authorizations are issued and the availability of federal funds once the UPWPs are approved. Abra Horne, FDOT Metropolitan Planning Administrator, responded that the state fiscal year's authorization funds will include 25% of what will be next year's combined amount of PL funds shown in the UPWP to include federal planning funds (PL) plus the federal section 5305(d) transit planning funds. A phased implementation of task work orders (TWOs) was recommended to prevent allocating all funds in the beginning of the state fiscal year.

A multi-prong approach is being developed:

- The FTA funds will cover several years.
- Existing PTGA funds or existing 5305(d) funds will be used where available
- A phased implementation plan is being developed for the CPG
- MPOs are encouraged to reach out to FDOT and district partners if issues arise

Meeting attendees discussed the following points of concern:

- The efficiency of the process given the reliance on a combination of funds.
- The possibility of timing the signatory process before the end of the federal fiscal year with the final signature after October 1.

Ms. Horne stated that she will investigate these issues and report back to the MPOAC.

Abra Horne presented an update on the Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) resolution. Ms. Horne shared the CPG process, benefits of the CPG, relevant documents and templates, the funding process, the agreement between FDOT and the MPOs, and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) revision guidance. She pointed out that staff in the Office of Policy Planning updated the forms and procedures to make the processes smoother and more straight forward.

Meeting attendees discussed the following items:

- The timing of the UPWP template in relation to the CPG update.
  - Ms. Horne responded that they are working simultaneously on the CPG update and UPWP template.
- The use of toll credits as a soft match, while they are available today, they may not be available in the future. Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO, requested that the CPG presentation to the Staff Directors and Governing Board on July 29, 2021 show how many toll credits are being generated and used per year and outline scenarios of an event that would cause toll credits to no longer be available.
  - Ms. Horne responded that, although the state has come close to the toll credits no longer being available, it has not happened.
- Carl Mikyska asked if they should memorialize how the funds are distributed to each individual MPO as a part of the resolution. The distribution formula is defined by population as outlined by FHWA but does not specify the source of the population figures, which have traditionally been based on figures provide by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida. Should the resolution specify the use of BEBR estimates of the census defined urban areas? The group agreed to table this discussion at a later point when the new census data is available.
- The FTA funds are different for each MPO based on ridership with transit operations. Greg Stuart, Broward MPO, asked if the formula funds from FTA will remain the same based on the way the MPO/TMA operates with their transit operators.
  - Ms. Horne responded that they are going to use the existing formulas.
  - Allison Fluitt, Kimley-Horn and Associates, further clarified that they looked at different potential funding scenarios to determine how the allocations would be done. To maintain levels and ensure equity between MPOs, maintaining this funding structure was easiest and most equitable. The funding structure can be reevaluated at a different time if desired by the MPOs.
- The process for updating the formula for PL funds.

- Dave Hutchinson commented on the policy positions and legislative positions for the new authorization. He believes that the current legislative position already specifies that new authorization should use the latest available Census data.

A motion recommending the MPOAC Staff Directors Advisory Committee and Governing Board approve the Consolidated Planning Grant resolution and forward it to FDOT, FTA, and FHWA to proceed with implementation was made by Beth Alden, Hillsborough TPO. A second was made by Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO. The motion was approved unanimously.

### C. SIS POLICY PLAN UPDATE

Gerald Goosby, FDOT Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Planning Manager, presented the SIS Policy Plan Update. The presentation included background information on the SIS, the SIS Policy Plan development process, SIS Policy Plan elements, current SIS objectives, and the 2022 SIS Policy Plan focus areas.

The meeting attendees discussed the following items:

- Beth Alden, Hillsborough TPO, asked if there will be additional focus on modal conflicts that include bicyclists and pedestrians.
  - The safety emphasis area was referred to as “vulnerable users” and will be flagged for this emphasis area in the SIS update. The language will be clear to communicate the relevance of bike/ped at intersections.
- Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, asked if considerations regarding cyber security are being incorporated into the update.
  - Cyber security has not been mentioned before in regard to resiliency and the SIS. With the increasing interconnectedness of critical infrastructure elements and electrification of the vehicle fleet it should be considered under resiliency. It may be covered under technology and innovation. The FTP identifies cybersecurity, whereas the SIS resiliency focus area is more directed to extreme weather and climate to identify and prepare for risks.
- Dave asked about policies that support the development of inner-city rail and policies to address issues that arose with Tri-rail and interstate construction that impacted the initial success of the rail. He also asked about the possibility of including preservation of rail corridors in the update.
  - There are plans to improve collaboration policies to avoid similar conflicts in the future. They will try to incorporate preservation into the update.
- Beth Alden asked how the SIS plan update is being coordinated with the rail plan update to ensure that state assets are used most effectively.
  - As part of the public partner involvement, FDOT is reaching out to all modal partners at the districts and at central office to provide feedback and input as they policies are developed. They are currently in the process of scheduling meetings with modal partners.
  - The intent of the FTP is to serve as an umbrella over all of those plans and the SIS includes the statewide high priority network– all of the modal plans should interrelate up

to the SIS and the FTP. Their goal is to have stronger collaboration between the SIS planning process and regional planning initiatives. Alison Stettner added that the passenger rail master plan is underway, the policies and the feedback informs the SIS policy plan. During this process several factors such as preservation of corridors, mechanisms that need to be in place, legislative changes will be considered as policy decisions are made and added into the SIS Policy Plan.

- The I-4 frame project can be studied as a model that contemplates technology improvements on the corridors and parallel facilities.
- District 4 prioritization process for SIS projects and the SIS draft cost feasible plan

A presentation will be given at the MPOAC Governing Board meeting. District staff will provide briefings for MPO Boards and committees. The briefings will include a short presentation highlighting focus areas and key objectives of the SIS Policy Plan update. FDOT is currently assembling a toolkit of documents, fliers, and possibly surveys for the districts to use during these briefings.

The group broke for lunch at 12:09 p.m. until 1:15 p.m.

#### D. LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS FOR THE 2022 FLORIDA SESSION

Every year the MPOAC produces a set of legislative priorities and policy positions that are sent to the legislature. The purpose of this document is to provide policy guidance as discussions relative to the legislative sessions occur. Individual MPOs are encouraged to use the MPOAC legislative policy positions during discussions with their legislative representatives. Jeff Kramer, MPOAC Interim Executive Director/CUTR, announced that the 2021 legislative priorities and policy positions are currently available on the MPOAC website. Mr. Kramer presented the 2022 draft legislative policy positions for discussion and feedback from the Policy and Technical committee members.

#### **Policy Position 1: Expands transportation revenue sources and stabilizes transportation funding levels.**

The group discussed the following items:

- Strengthening the top line statement to emphasize sustainability and facilitating project delivery.
- Adding a statement to address the availability of existing local option funding sources.
- Electric vehicle (EV) registration fees.
- Alternatively fueled vehicle fees and emphasizing electric vehicles.
- Impact fees.

Committee members recommended the following changes to policy position #1:

- Modifying the top line statement to read **Supports an increase in transportation investment through dedicated and sustainable funding, including innovative financing options;**

encourages partnerships between public and private entities; and facilitates the expedited delivery of projects

- Charge alternatively fueled vehicles a fee equal to the fuel tax paid by gasoline or diesel fueled vehicles, such as an electric vehicle registration fee.
- No reduction in local option transportation revenue sources.

**Policy Position #2: Regulates distracted driving by prohibiting the handheld use of electronic wireless communication devices and other similar distracting devices while operating a motor vehicle on any roadway.**

The group discussed the following items:

- The implementation of this law and its potential equity implications.
- Clarity in wording for communication devices versus electronic devices, which was presented in the context of texting while driving.

No changes were suggested for policy position #2.

**Policy Position #3: Adds provisions to Florida’s Sunshine Law to allow all government entities to hold virtual meetings during a declared emergency plus a period of 90 days past the declared emergency dates.**

This is a new policy position. There was no additional discussion on this item.

**Policy Position #4: Allows Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) funds to be used on roads, transit, and other transportation facilities not designated on the SIS if the improvement will enhance mobility or support freight transportation on the SIS.**

The group discussed the following items:

- Multi-county passenger rail.
  - The SIS policy plan update will define what regional means. This clarification which will help define the parameters for passenger rail.

No changes were suggested for policy position #4.

**Policy Position #5: Establishes flexible and predictable funding for transit projects (capital and operating) identified through the metropolitan transportation planning process by removing various funding limitations for the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF).**

The group discussed the following items:

- Ensuring consistency with Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) legislative policies.
- The timing of the language from FPTA

- The language from FTPA won't be available until August/September 2021, after the MPOAC approves the policy positions.

Committee members agreed to staff's suggestion to remove two bullets to align the language with FPTA's policy position and make grammatical changes as needed.

**Policy Position #6: Recognizes that federal metropolitan transportation planning funds shall not be regarded as state funds for purposes of expenditure.**

The MPOAC has kept this policy position for some time. There was no additional discussion on this item.

No changes were suggested for policy position #6

**Policy Position #7: Supports the advancement of innovative transportation mobility solutions and policies that promote creative approaches to addressing transportation needs, while simultaneously protecting citizens from malicious tampering with such technologies by making tampering a punishable offense.**

The group discussed the following items:

- Clarity on the term "tampering as a punishable offense"

No changes were suggested for policy position #7.

### **Other Ideas**

Mr. Kramer presented other items that may be considered during the legislative session including protecting Regional Planning Councils (RPCs), supporting mid-block crossing policies currently in place, and changes to s. 339.175 F.S. relative to the MPOAC.

The group discussed that RPCs will not likely be addressed this legislative session. Although mid-block crossing policies will likely be a topic of discussion during the 2022 legislative session, the membership agreed to not include a policy position on this subject. It was determined that the MPOAC Strategic Directions Plan should be updated before addressing 339.175

Staff sought a motion to accept all the changes and advance the policy positions to the Staff Directors. Alison Stettner, FDOT, asked if the policy positions were in priority order. Mr. Kramer confirmed that thought has been given to the order of the positions.

Carl Mikyska, Pasco MPO, made a motion recommending the Staff Directors approve the 2022 legislative policy positions and advance the policy positions to the Governing Board for approval. Beth Alden, Hillsborough TPO, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## E. NOTEWORTHY PRACTICES WORKING GROUP FUTURE DIRECTION

The Noteworthy Practices Working Group was formed out of the MPOAC Strategic Directions (originally called the Best Practices Working Group). It was determined that the MPOAC would give awards for noteworthy practices, share documents between MPOs, serve as a resource for issues Florida MPOs may face, and point to examples for smaller MPOs.

The working group reviewed certification reports and FDOT annual reviews of the MPOs to identify best practices from 2019. The group members then ranked the best practices and identified 8 to 10 notable projects. Group members presented best practices at working group meetings, the group participated in lighting round presentations at several conferences/meetings, including APA Florida and Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP). Best practices were also included in a publication and each working group member contributed to a summary document that was posted on the MPOAC website. A logo was developed for the best practices recipients and only used the first year. The intent was to provide more recognition for the award recipients. Due to COVID, the group has not met or presented best practices in 2020.

Beth Alden, Hillsborough TPO, led the discussion on the future direction of the MPOAC Noteworthy Practices Working Group. Meeting attendees discussed how to proceed with selecting and presenting best practices. Options discussed included the following:

- Select new noteworthy practices.
- Ask the MPOAC Interim Executive Director to review certification reports to identify new notable practices.
- Send out a call for MPOs to self-nominate their projects.
- Send out the 2020 best practices list to select the projects that are still relevant.

It was determined that they will reconvene the group and then discuss the process and options for selecting best practices.

The group discussed how to share information about selected projects with the broader public and practitioners. If presenting at the Governing Board meetings, consideration should be given to the limited time allocated in the agendas for non-action items. To address time limitations, presentations could be short, lighting round style presentations, with certificates. If a Governing Board member's MPO is being recognized, these presentations may be a point of pride. For additional venues, project type may determine the appropriate practice to highlight. For example, transit-related projects could be presented at FPTA.

Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, asked if they should revisit the Noteworthy Practices Working Group in the update of the strategic plan. Ms. Alden suggested that they include a call for a new working group chair at the Staff Directors' Advisory Committee meeting in October 2021. Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO, stated that the original intent was to have each chair serve 2 years and then rotate to avoid overly burdening the staff directors. The group discussed the potential for a Working Group meeting in October 2021. Members agreed

that, instead of holding a Working Group meeting in October 2021, it would be appropriate to include the Working Group as a discussion item at the October Staff Directors' Advisory Committee meeting.

#### • MEMBER COMMENTS

- Dave Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, asked about the meeting location and the requirement, per state statute, to meet at a “green lodging” facility.
  - Don Scott responded that the MPOAC is exploring options.
  - There is a contract for the July meeting, John Waldron, MPOAC, is contacting “green lodging” facilities in Orlando near the airport and the interstate for October.
  - Mr. Waldron stated that contract forms have been sent over to compare, and work with other facilities.
- Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO, shared that he has been appointed as the chair for the AMPO Executive Director’s Peer Group and will be reaching out to the group when they kick-off the group.
- Jeff Sheffield, North Florida TPO, discussed the smart city space initiative in north east Florida, stating that it aligns with the MPOAC policy position #6. He described the initiative to the group and shared that they are in the early stages of drafting a proposed bill that will go to the legislature for smart region zones (framed similarly to freight logistics zones). Those able to identify a strategic plan, geographic boundary, consensus, and in two or more counties (so that it is regional in nature) would receive the designation and funding associated with those eligible zones to pilot or provide proof of concept to build out the smart city ecosystem. The ecosystem would leverage healthcare, public safety, transportation, education economic development, etc. Mr. Sheffield will share available information with Jeff Kramer, MPOAC Interim Executive Director/MPOAC, to share with the group.
- Alison Stettner, FDOT, shared that the Federal Findings meeting will be held on July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> the invitation has been sent out and the agenda will be sent out shortly. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, a meeting was held on the safety targets and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and how it relates to MPO Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). The webinar has been recorded and will be made available. A series of webinars will be held to ensure safety is better incorporated into plans and priorities, and how to leverage the funds. On July 20<sup>th</sup>, the transit safety targets need to be set.
  - Don Scott asked to whom questions about the grant application process (GAP) process should be directed to. Abra Horne responded that more training is coming up on this topic and she will send the information to Mr. Kramer to forward to the MPOs.
- Don Scott shared that the July MPOAC meeting will be in-person only and that Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) staff will not attend due to travel restrictions, although there may be updates that will allow them to attend.
- Gary Harrell, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, updated the group on his retirement. The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Board hired his replacement who will start in July.

- **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 pm